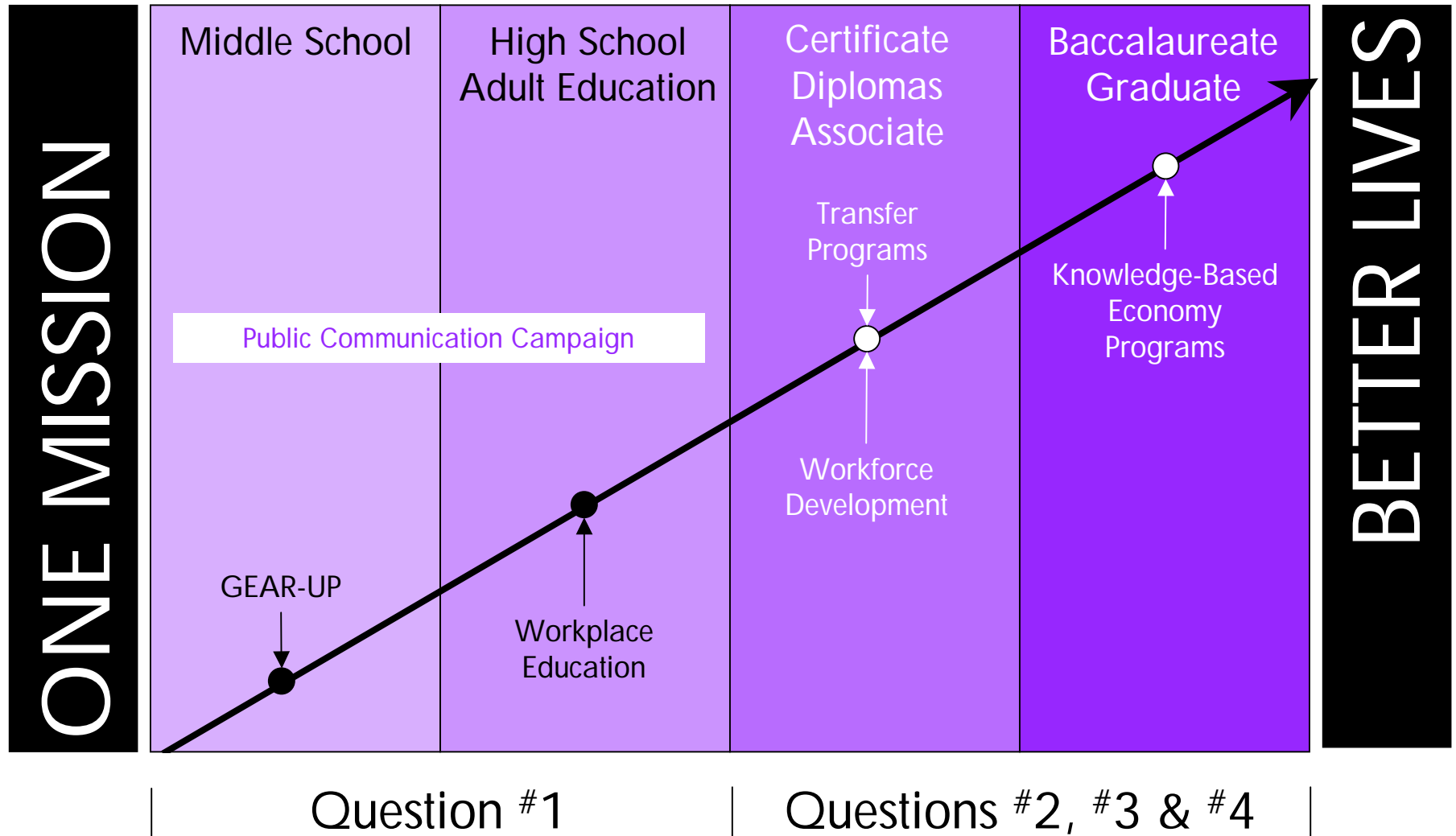


Preparing Kentuckians for the Knowledge-Based Economy



Council on Postsecondary Education
March 25, 2002

Executive Summary

Special Agenda – Preparing Kentuckians for the Knowledge-Based Economy

At the February meeting, council members discussed with leading scholars, business leaders, and the presidents of Kentucky's two research universities the role of postsecondary education in creating the intellectual capital that will help to transform Kentucky's economy. This is one important part of the postsecondary education reform. The other part is educating women and men to become skilled and knowledgeable citizens and workers in a knowledge-based economy. The special agenda for the March meeting focuses on programs that increase access and seek to motivate participation in education beyond high school.

One reason for low levels of participation in postsecondary education is simply that people don't know what opportunities are available to them. Neither do they know why it is critically important for them to take advantage of these opportunities. As the president of a major research university observed some years ago, "We don't know what we don't know." Part of this reform is helping

people know that they need advanced education for their own good and that of their families and communities.

In June 2001 the council began a statewide public communication campaign to raise awareness of the need for more education and to involve communities across the state in convincing their citizens to continue their educations.

Faculty from several universities and the KCTCS worked with two communications firms, Red7e and Guthrie Mayes, to design the campaign.

Building on the Education Pays campaign initiated by Governor Patton, the first phase of the Go Higher campaign sought to reach adults who had dropped out of the educational system, either not finishing high school or finishing it inadequately prepared to go on. Working with the Department of Adult Education and Literacy, it sought to increase the numbers of people who took and passed the GED examinations. The results of this initial phase are dramatic. The number of people who took and passed the GED examination in the last six months of 2001 increased to 12,169, a 78 percent increase.

In the second phase, the campaign continues to promote adult participation in the GED preparation programs and workplace education. It now also promotes college-going to a younger audience of middle and high school students and to their parents. We'll begin the meeting with a few minutes of highlights from the Go Higher media campaign.

A partnership among early childhood programs, elementary and secondary schools, adult education centers, and colleges and universities is necessary to increase participation in postsecondary education. A state P-16 Council has been operating for two years to establish that partnership and to undertake important projects that close the gaps between the various “systems” of education in the Commonwealth. We’ll highlight P-16 initiatives when the Kentucky Board of Education and the council next meet. Today we propose to discuss with you a program targeted at middle school students and their parents, and another targeted at adults who have dropped out of the educational systems. Then you will have an opportunity to talk about the work being done by our postsecondary institutions to prepare a skilled and knowledgeable workforce and citizenry – from customized training through advanced degrees.

First, Yvonne Lovell, director of the state GEAR UP grant, will describe this federally funded project. GEAR UP is an acronym for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. The program will run for five years and is funded by \$21 million, half of which is from a federal grant and the other half from state matching funds. The Kentucky Board of Education, the Prichard Committee, and the council are partners in the grant. There are several local GEAR UP grants throughout the state, the largest of which is administered by Morehead State University. All the GEAR UP programs are working closely together. Their goal is ambitious: to help thousands of

economically disadvantaged students who are now in middle schools throughout Kentucky understand that they can and should go on to college. Bob Sexton, executive director of the Prichard Committee, will join Yvonne in describing the program. Rich Prewitt, principal of Whitley County Middle School, and Gail Yates, community education coordinator at Christian County Middle School, will tell you how GEAR UP is affecting students in their schools.

Next, Julie Scoskie, director of the Jefferson County Adult Education Program, will highlight work being done to raise educational levels and strengthen the workforce in her part of the state. She will be joined by Pat O'Leary, human resource director at UPS in Louisville, and Bob Huffman, executive director of Kentuckiana Works.

The communications campaign promotes general awareness of the importance of education beyond high school. GEAR UP seeks to reach youngsters at a critical stage in their development, when decisions they make can affect their readiness for college. Adult education programs offer opportunities to persons who, for various reasons, did not persist in the traditional educational systems. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System ties into all these efforts because it is within driving distance of every Kentuckian and is open to all who want and can benefit from its services.

Mike McCall, president of the KCTCS, will describe the system's work with high schools, employers, and four-year colleges. Since 1998, the KCTCS has increased its enrollment by more than 17,000 students. By 2006, it aims to increase its enrollment to 76,700, an increase of more than 30,000 students since 1998. Mike is joined by employers who will discuss their partnerships with the KCTCS.

Finally, Presidents Joanne Glasser and Jim Votruba will discuss with you the ways in which the universities are preparing people for jobs in a knowledge-based economy, contributing to economic development, and working to improve Kentucky's communities. They are joined by Sylvia Lovely, president of the Kentucky League of Cities, who will provide her perspective.